(c) whether it is also a fact that all the formalities have been completed as required for an international airport; and

(d) if so, when the Airport will be functional to start flights to South African countries as well as other foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d) The Ahmedabad airport has been upgraded to international standards for operation of international flights. The airport has been already renamed as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. Indian Airlines and Air India are already operating flights from Ahmedabad via Mumbai to New York, Chicago, London, Paris, Moscow, Nairobi, Dar-Es-Salaam, Muscat, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jeddah, Sharjah, Riyadh, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Advice of Ministry officials on conversion of Jaipur Airport

668. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some sections of his Ministry officials have strongly advised to convert Jaipur into an International Airport; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not taking the necessary steps to make Jaipur an Internatioal Airport in the interest of the travelling public?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

CAG's Report on TRAI

669. DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item titled "CAG criticises TRAI for exceeding personal entitlements" as appeared in the Indian Express dated the 1st November, 1999;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Comptroller and Auditor General has criticised the Chairperson and Members of Telecom Regulatory Authority for exceeding their powers relating to personal entitlement;

(c) if so, whether the matter is investigated by Government so far;

(d) if so, the details of the enquiry and action taken thereon; and

(e) the future course of action proposed to be taken to avoid such situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Prior to issue of Government notification regulating terms and conditions of service of Chairperson, TRAI and other Members w.e.f. 15.3.99 TRAI had issued internal orders regulating personal entitlements etc. of the Chairperson and members. Some of these provisions have been adversely commented upon by the C&AG of India in his report No. 4 covering "other autonomous bodies" presented to Parliament on 29th October, 1999.

(c) to (e) The Department has issued orders regularising the expenditure incurred by Chairperson and Members from the date of assumption of their office till 14.3.99. For the period from 15.3.99 onwards the terms and conditions of their service are governed by the notifications issued by Government in terms of Section 35(2)(a) of the TRAI Act. Alongwith certain relaxations and additional facilities given subsequently.

Other observations contained in the Audit report are being examined and suitable remedial steps will be taken.

Damage Caused to Telecommunications Network in Orissa by Cyclone

670. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of damage caused to Telecommunications network due to super Cyclone which swept over Orissa on 29th October, 1999;

(b) the estimated loss thereof; and